

NEW YORK TIMES

+ Page 47

27 JUL 1976

Carter and Mondale Begin National Policy Briefings

STAT

By LINDA CHARLTON
Special to The New York Times

PLAINS, Ga., July 26—Jimmy Carter, the Democratic Presidential nominee, and his running mate, Senate Walter F. Mondale, began a series of national policy briefings today with a session on defense involving eight experts ranging from scholars to former top Pentagon officials.

The briefing session, which began about two hours behind schedule because of a problem involving the bus that was to bring the participants to Plains from Atlanta, was held at the "pond house" owned by Mr. Carter's mother outside the town. Mr. Carter had a news conference about 90 minutes after it started to give some details of what had been discussed and what was on the agenda.

The session, he said, was actually "quite a heated debate" that included the prospects for success of the arms limitation talks, United States nuclear commitments and those of the Soviet Union, and the "rough equivalency" now maintained in strategic capability by the United States and the Soviet Union.

He said there was discussion of both nations' defense expenditures and specific weapons systems. "More advanced security matters," he said, would be discussed at the briefing Wednesday by the Director of Central Intelligence, George Bush.

Topics on Agenda

On the agenda for today's session, Mr. Carter said, was a discussion of the efficiency of the Defense Department, and whether defense spending on new weapons systems is coordinated with foreign policy. Another aspect of the Defense Department's schedule to be considered, he said, was whether the Pentagon now had "responsibility for aspects of our national life that can best be performed by civilian agencies" and the ability of the defense structure to make rapid decisions.

The briefing participants, Mr. Carter said, had been "helping me for a year or more." They were Paul C. Warnke, an Assistant Secretary of Defense in the Johnson Administration; Paul H. Nitze, a former Under-Secretary of Defense and a former Secretary of the Navy; Cyrus R. Vance, a former deputy Secretary of Defense; Dr. Harold Brown, a former Secretary of the Air Force and now the president of the California Institute of Technology; four former members of the National Security Council staff, James Woolsey, and Walter Slocombe.

Both Washington lawyers, Lyn Davis, a professor at Columbia University, and Barry Blechman, a senior fellow in the foreign studies policy program at Brookings Institute.

The "pond house" where the briefings are being held is about four miles out of Plains, in the piney woods beside a brown pond. Senator and Mrs. Mondale have been staying there since their arrival in Plains Saturday night.

In response to questions, Mr. Carter gave a few additional details, stressing that there was unanimity among the participants on the necessity of maintaining "rough equivalency" and "that we need to maintain a strong defense." He said that he and Mr. Mondale were being briefed on the "relative capability" of land-based, airborne and naval weapons, and that much of the discussion up to that point had concerned "strategy as related to atomic weapons."

In response to another question Mr. Carter said, as he has before, that in the event of an attack on the United States or on another nation with which this country has "binding agreements," he would "have to consider the use of atomic weapons." He said, in response to another question that he did not think the United States was "second best" militarily. He said that although there were some areas in which the Soviet

Union did have superiority they were balanced by United States superiority in areas such as manned bombers.

Mr. Carter, who stood with Mr. Mondale beside him, was also asked his reaction to Ronald Reagan's choice of Senator Richard Schweiker as his Vice Presidential choice. Mr. Carter said with a grin that he thought this a "sharply balanced ticket." He said he knew of Mr. Schweiker to be among the most liberal of Republican Senators and had heard "good things" about him.

He was also asked about reports that a nephew, William Spann, was in prison in California for armed robbery. Mr. Carter said that Mr. Spann, a son of his older sister, Mrs. Gloria Spann, "has been in constant trouble all his adult life." He said that he did not know what special charge he faced in his last encounter with the law.